

OF THE DELAWARE INDIANS

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that the Delaware groups nearest to the Iroquois had been influenced by them. The Munsie were nearest to the Iroquois, and Harrington's informants were predominantly of this group. The various house styles, on the other hand, are possibly related to the seasonal movements of the Delawares, who, like the central Algonkians, may have utilized the rectangular, bark-covered long house in summer and the dome-shaped lodge in winter.¹²⁹

The dome-shaped lodges were simple structures built by placing pieces of bark, preferably of linden or elm, over a sapling framework. The bark was stripped from the trees in summer in as large sheets as possible and dried. It then provided a watertight house.¹³⁰ House furnishings were rather meager. "They . . . make very fine, strong and artistic mats of finely painted spruce roots and strong straw, with all kinds of figures, to decorate and cover the walls with, and to place below their bed clothes."¹³¹ Rush mats were painted and fastened to the walls in winter to keep out the cold. Some houses had "portraits and pictures somewhat rudely carved."¹³² By the eighteenth century platforms made of poles, which encircled the walls and served as tables, benches, and beds, were mentioned.¹³³ The platform was covered by an untanned skin of bear or deer, or else with a mat.

Near each village was one or more sweat houses:

When they wish to cleanse themselves of their foulness, they go in the autumn, when it begins to grow cold, and make, away off, near a running brook, a small oven, large enough for three or four men to lie in it. In making it they first take twigs of trees, and then cover them tight with clay, so that smoke cannot escape. This being done, they take a parcel of stones, which they heat in a fire, and then put in the oven, and when they think that it is sufficiently hot, they take the stones out again, and go and lie in it, men and women, boys and girls.¹³⁴

Informants (O.A., J.T.) recalled small sweat lodges of this type. Skinner found "small beds of cracked stones and pebbles, without relics, often at some distance from other remains. . . ."¹³⁵ Thus, archaeological remains tend to confirm the existence of this trait for the prehistoric people of Staten Island.

Clothing.—The amount of clothing worn by the Delawares varied with the season. In summer men wore only a leather breech cloth and women only a short skirt, and they frequently did without moccasins.¹³⁶ In colder seasons the principal garment was a skin of beaver, fox, deer, bear, elk, or raccoon.¹³⁷ The hair side was worn next to the body in

¹²⁹ Wissler, 1917, p. 221; Denton, 1945, p. 7.

¹³⁰ Thomas, 1912, p. 341; Heckewelder, 1801, p. 401; Mohr, 1844, pp. 381-82; O. A.

¹³¹ Lindstrom, 1925, p. 222.

¹³² O'Callaghan, 1850, I: 283; Hayes, 1864, p. 77.

¹³³ Ziebscher, 1910, p. 17.

¹³⁴ De Vries, 1909, pp. 217-18; Lindstrom, 1925, p. 257, described the sweat lodge in similar terms.

¹³⁵ Skinner, 1909, p. 48.

¹³⁶ Pastorius, 1912, p. 384; Lindstrom, 1925, pp. 191-92.

¹³⁷ De Laet, 1606, p. 57; De Rasieres, 1606, p. 106; Thomas, 1912, p. 341; Juet, 1609, p. 18; Van der Donck, 1609, p. 301.

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Flour was either ground between two stones or pounded in a mortar and pestle by the Delaware. The mortar was usually a hollowed tree trunk, the pestle a suitably shaped stone (Smith, p. 138; Lindstrom, pp. 253-54; Abbott, 1875, p. 357; Kalm, p. 230).

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Stone pottery and clay pipes have been uncovered on archaeological sites. Lindstrom describes the Lenape pipes as beautifully painted and glazed with birds and animals on the head. He says there are some "...an ell in length, which are screwed together with leather, ...and in these pipe-heads will go a handful of tobacco" (Lindstrom, p. 197). These were presumably of European manufacture. The pipes which have been recovered from old sites are of a much humbler variety (Abbott, 1875, pp. 343-44; Skinner, 1909, p. 27; Butler, p. 249). This apparent inconsistency can be readily explained, however, by assuming that Lindstrom was referring to the calumets or peace pipes, which were relatively rare and would be likely to have been carried west by the owners when they moved (Kalm, pp. 231-32).

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Some household items manufactured by the Delaware women were mats, ropes and baskets made from wild hemp, spruce roots, corn husks and rushes. The mats, which were sometimes painted or had figures worked in or over the weave, were hung on the walls for increased protection against the elements as well as to beautify the house (Smith, p. 138; Lindstrom, p. 221; Harrington, 1913, p. 224). They were also used as part of the bedding together with the skin or turkey-feather robes which served as clothing during the day (Johnson, p. 280; Heckevelde, 1861, p. 203). The turkey-feather robes deserve special attention as they were evidently one of the most distinctive and beautiful of the Delaware's manufactures. Lindstrom says: "They also make fine and beautiful quilts of painted bird feathers. In the first place they tie them with meshes like nets, yet very fine; then they fasten the feathers in the meshes, so neat and strong that not one feather can come loose from it..." (Lindstrom, pp. 221-22). When there was a "bed," it consisted of a wooden shelf running around the interior wall of the house and serving as a seat by day (Harrington, 1913, p. 218; Zeisberger, 1910, p. 17; Skinner, 1915, p. 7).

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The most common type of Delaware house was a small hut consisting of a rectangular, gabled frame of saplings covered with bark or mats. Penn describes their houses thus: "Their Houses are Mats, or Bark of Trees set on Poles, in the fashion of an English Barn, but out of the power of the Winds, for they are hardly higher than a Man..." (Penn, p. 31). Some Delaware, however, constructed a house large enough to accommodate several families, the increase in size all deriving from greater length. The result was not unlike an Iroquois longhouse.⁶ In the center of the house was one or more fires depending on the length of the building, and the ridge of the roof was arranged with an opening through which the smoke could

- 237 then they fasten the feathers in the meshes, so neat
237 and strong that not one feather can come loose
from it; it would sooner go clear off.⁹ They also
● 235 make very fine, strong and artistic mats of finely
painted spruce roots and strong straw, with all
kinds of figures, to decorate and cover the walls
with, and to place below their bed clothes.⁹
714 They also make helmets of hard sticks and
322 strong wood, so that no arrow or swingle can go
through it.¹⁰
643 The late Governor Printz had the savages make
and thread up for him a suit of clothes, with coat,
trousers and sword belt, entirely of their money,
which was very artistic, threaded and worked with
all kinds of animals, which came to a few thousand
florins.¹¹ And [there is] much more, which could
be described about their artistic manufacture, if
space and time would allow. In fine if they were
trained and kept at it, they would become very
expert, for they are by nature capable to grasp
and comprehend immediately what they see.¹²

⁹ The feather would sooner break off than come loose.

¹⁰ Cf. Williams, Key, 47 ff.

¹¹ Repetition, see above.

¹² Williams says: "Neyhommauhunch, a coat or Mantle, curiously made of the fairest feathers of their Neyhommauhog or Turkeys, which commonly their old Men make; and is with them as velvet with us." Key, 107.

¹³ Cf. Williams, Key, 43.

Delaware Indian Art Designs

GLADYS TANTAQUIDGEON

INTRODUCTION

in Kansas, and from there they moved to Oklahoma and became incorporated with the Cherokee. Other bands found their way to Canada in the Province of Ontario, where they are now known as Delawares, Munsee and Moravians.

The present population of the Delawares is estimated to be about 1,400. Of this number, 1,000 are in Oklahoma and the remainder in the province of Ontario, Canada.

FIELD OF ART

Until about 1890 the Delawares practiced many of their native arts and crafts but among the modern descendants of the tribe only a few of the older arts have survived. Pottery making, work in stone, bone, horn, antler, silver and the use of quills and hair in embroidery; twined basketry made from certain roots, and woven bags and girdles of Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*) are now only vaguely remembered by some of the older members of the groups in Oklahoma and Ontario. Work in silver persisted until

About 1913.

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- 463 about 1913. The Delaware women and a few men are yet skilled workers in beads,
531 both in sewed-on designs and in bead weaving. The women are expert in the art of working out intricate designs in ribbon applique on robes, leggings, breech cloths and moccasins. Some wood carving is also
322 done by the modern Delawares and a few
285 make splint baskets.

DESIGNS AND SYMBOLISM

- 531 In the study of Delaware art motifs we find that they fall into two groups. In group A are the ancient earth symbols, floral and geometric (angular) patterns; in group B, the religious symbols of the Peyote Cult. This is a religious teaching and ceremony that arose in the tribe about 50 years ago. Animal and human figures rarely occur in Delaware art. In archeological finds, representations of the human face in stone frequently occur but those are said to have been the charms owned and worn by certain individuals who had dreamed of the mask spirit and had the right to use its likeness as representative of the great spiritual force or guardian spirit.
[172] If a person saw an animal during his dream quest he would have the right to use the likeness of that particular animal on his wearing apparel. It is also permissible to
[787] have representations of clan animal totems on one's vest or tobacco pouch.
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- The earth symbols and the "trails" shown in plate 1 are said to be ancient, as well as figures A and B called "clasps" in plate 2. The earth symbols in plate 1 illustrate the native Delaware belief that the earth rests on the back of a tortoise and that the sun in its daily round goes under the tortoise and comes up on the opposite side the next day. Figure C, plate 1, symbolizes the power of the Creator which is felt in the four corners of the earth. These symbols occur in the ancient art designs of other Algonkian peoples in northeastern North America from Labrador to southern New England. Floral patterns for moccasin tops or vamps, breech cloths, robes and bags fall into this grouping (plates 3 and 4).

[P. 25, A]